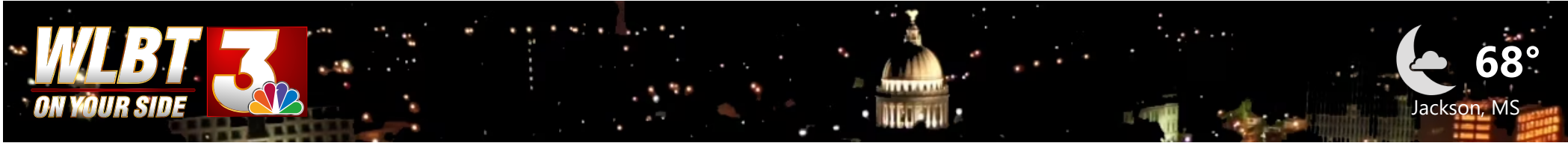


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John Davis pleads guilty for conspiracy to defraud the State of Mississippi of millions



John Davis, former director of the Mississippi Department of Human Services, enters the Thad Cochran United States Courthouse in Jackson, Miss., Thursday, Sept. 22, 2022, where he is set to plead guilty to new federal charges in a conspiracy to misspend tens of millions of dollars that were intended to help needy families. (AP Photo/Rogelio V. Solis) (Rogelio V. Solis | AP)

By [WLBT.com Staff](#)

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JACKSON, Miss. (WLBT) - On Thursday, the former Mississippi Department of Human Services director, John Davis, pleaded guilty to his role in the [state's largest welfare scheme](#).

The investigation found that MDHS misspent more than \$77 million in welfare funds under Davis, including \$1.1 million in TANF funds.

According to documents filed in Judge Adrienne Wooten's courtroom, John Davis pleaded guilty to 5 counts of conspiracy and 13 counts of fraud against the government.

Judge Wooten sentenced Davis to spend 32 years in the custody of the Mississippi Department of Corrections. She also ordered him to pay restitution.

Davis also pleaded guilty to one federal charge of conspiracy and one federal charge of theft concerning programs receiving federal funds this morning in the courtroom of Judge Carlton Reeves.

For these crimes, Davis faces up to 15 years in federal prison and \$500,000 in fines. He also agreed to forfeit assets he gained as a result of these crimes.

State Auditor Shad White said Davis' actions represent a historic day for justice.

“Today marks an important day for justice for Mississippians in the massive welfare scheme that my office uncovered more than two years ago. District Attorney Jody Owens and his team did an incredible job putting a stop to the flow of money to the fraudsters who took from the poorest in the state. We would not be here if they had not shown courage and the willingness to charge these individuals with crimes. We are also grateful for our federal partners and their work obtaining a guilty plea this week, too. My team has given every piece of evidence we have to federal investigators and will continue to work jointly with them to see this matter to its conclusion.”

— State Auditor Shad White

Gov. Tate Reeves said there must be consequences for any actions, such as these, against the government.

Governor Tate Reeves

@tatereeves · Follow

After this guilty plea, it is abundantly clear that John Davis and his alleged co-conspirators abused the trust of taxpayers. It is just that there be consequences for anyone who defrauds the people that we are tasked to serve.

12:51 PM · Sep 22, 2022

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John Davis is scheduled to be sentenced for his crimes by Judge Reeves in February 2023.

However, the investigation continues into what’s been called the biggest public fraud scheme in state history.

State Auditor Shad White announced the arrest of John Davis and five other individuals as part of what is now Mississippi’s largest public fraud scheme in February 2020. Since then, multiple people have pleaded guilty to criminal charges in state court.


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- In December 2020, [Brett DiBiase](#) pleaded guilty to making fraudulent statements in Judge Tomie Green’s courtroom and paid \$5,000 in restitution at that time. DiBiase has not yet been sentenced for his crime.
- [Anne McGrew](#) is guilty of conspiracy. She entered a guilty plea in Judge Adrienne Wooten’s courtroom in October 2021. McGrew will be sentenced for her crime at a later date.
- In April 2022, [Nancy New](#) pleaded guilty to multiple charges of bribery of a public official, fraud against the government, mail fraud, and racketeering in Judge Faye Peterson’s courtroom. New is awaiting sentencing for her crimes.
- [Zach New](#) also pleaded guilty to multiple charges of bribery of a public official, fraud against the government, and mail fraud in Judge Faye Peterson’s courtroom in April 2022. Zach New has not yet been sentenced for his crimes.

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